1342.0.14.

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MDCCLV.

TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

Princeſs Dowager of *Wales*.

MADAM,

THE Honour of being permitted to dedicate *APPIUS* to Your Royal Highness, is ſuch, that the Author wants Words to expreſs his Gratitude. No Performance which has not a Tendency to promote the Cauſe of Virtue, can be deemed worthy of ſuch an Illuſtrious Patronage. This was the Author's Aim; and, if he has failed in the Execution, he

humbly

humbly hopes that ſome Atonement may be made by the Goodneſs of his Intention.

That Your ROYAL HIGHNESS may long continue to adorn Your exalted Station, and to diffuſe the glorious Influence of Your great Example, is the fervent Prayer of,

MADAM,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's

Moſt obedient,

Moſt devoted, and

Moſt faithful

Humble Servant,

JOHN MONCREIFF.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. CIBBER.

HOW great the Poet's Task, who, new to Fame,
Seeks by the Drama to procure a Name!—
The Muse's mighty Labour at an End,
Friends he must have;—to judge, to recommend.—
Few care to judge.——What the best Judges feel,
Ev'n they, thro' modest Diffidence conceal.---
Witlings and Critics of a bastard Kind,
See Faults indeed; but are to Beauties blind.
Such, keen to nibble at a Word or Phrase,
Resign to Men of Sense the Task of Praise.---
Some---rising Merit, from its Dawn, oppose:
To such, a Rival is the worst of Foes.——
'Twere endless, it were needless to relate
The well-known Hardships of an Author's Fate.

Each Hardship, ev'ry Obstacle surpast,
Virginius *comes upon the Stage at last:*
That Father comes, whose dire, whose mournful Deed
Rome *from the bloody Yoke of* Appius *freed.*
For this his Name was to his Country dear.---
What drew the Roman, *claims the* British *Tear.*

Our Author hopes slight Errors you'll excuse;
Since who could ever boast a faultless Muse?
His Roman *Subject, with Attention due,*
With Candour treated, he submits to you.
To your high Judgment he submits his Cause;
Alike resign'd to Censure or Applause.—
Britons! *your native Equity display;*
And judge, like Romans, *of what* Romans *say.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

APPIUS CLAUDIUS, *Chief of the Decemvirs*,		Mr. SPARKS.
L. VALERIUS, M. HORATIUS,	Roman *Senators*,	Mr. RIDOUT. Mr. ANDERSON.
A. VIRGINIUS, *the Father*	*of* Virginia,	Mr. SHERIDAN.
L. ICILIUS, *the Lover*		Mr. SMITH.
P. NUMITORIUS, *Uncle*		Mr. STEVENS.
M. CLAUDIUS, *the Miniſter of* Appius,		Mr. GIBSON.
C. SICINIUS, M. DUELLIUS, M. POMPONIUS,	*Plebeian Chiefs*,	Mr. BENNET. Mr. WHITE. Mr. R. SMITH.
FLAMINIUS,		Mr. REDMAN.

WOMEN.

VIRGINIA,	Mrs. BELLAMY.
CAMILLA,	Mrs. ELMY.
DORA,	Miſs COPEN.

Plebeians, Lictors, &c. SCENE, Rome.

APPIUS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Scene the Forum.

VALERIUS, HORATIUS.

VALERIUS.

HORATIUS, while I reaſon with myſelf,
While I compare the preſent with the paſt,
Methinks the Spirit of the Roman People
Can never brook this Uſurpation long.

HORATIUS.

Alas! I tremble when I think of APPIUS.
His wild Ambition, like a waſteful Deluge,
Has ravag'd Rome. Majeſtic Liberty,
The Pledge of public Happineſs, the Pride
And Bulwark of our Fathers;—is no more.

VALERIUS.

Obſerve and trace him thro' the various Steps
Of his outrageous Conduct; you'll perceive
That ſuch a Scene of bold Iniquity
Muſt quickly end.

HORATIUS.

Is not the legal Time
Of the Decemvirate expir'd already?
Long ſince expir'd?—Ah! let us mourn, VALERIUS,
The fatal Error of the great Republic,
When ſhe, with giddy Confidence, reſign'd
Her Gem of Liberty, that dear-bought Gem,
In Truſt to Men like APPIUS.

VALERIUS.

The Pretence
Was fair, which mov'd us to create Decemvirs;
And with Authority ſupreme to veſt
Their ſacred College:—that they might, uncurb'd,
Frame and eſtabliſh, with reſiſtleſs Sanction,
Laws, founded on the great Originals
Of Athens and of Sparta.—But, in truth,
There was another Reaſon, more perſuaſive,
Tho' leſs avow'd; and ſcarce perhaps obſerv'd
Ev'n by the Minds it work'd upon.

HORATIUS.

What Reaſon?

VALERIUS.

The young Republic, like a wayward Steed
Unbroken to the Bit, with headſtrong Will,
From the ſmooth middle Track of Freedom err'd
To wild Extremes.—By Turns patrician Power,
Oppreſſion and the Pride of Wealth prevail'd:—
By Turns Sedition, kindling at the Beck
Of Tribunes, popularly rag'd, and threaten'd

Mere Anarchy.—Rome's Conſuls and her Tribunes
So ſorely vex'd the Commonwealth by Turns,
That, weary of them, for a ſhort Repoſe,
We liſten'd to the Reaſons which adviſ'd
The firſt Creation of Decemvirs.

HORATIUS.

Rome
Unwiſely truſted in their Hands, VALERIUS,
An uncontroulable Extent of Power.—
Still more unwiſely, when the too-long Date
Of their firſt Magiſtracy was expir'd,
She for a ſecond Year rechoſe them.

VALERIUS.

Mildly
The firſt Decemvirs govern'd Rome. Ev'n APPIUS,
Tho' foremoſt in the Number, and ſupreme
Above his Colleagues, artfully put on
Such gaudy Semblance of uncommon Zeal
To ſerve his Country, and ſo rich a Shew
Of Affability and humble Greatneſs,
That he won Eſtimation and loud Praiſe
From all except the wiſer few.

HORATIUS.

From theſe
His fair ſmooth Maſk of Popularity
Could never hide that Serpent of Ambition,
Which ſince has ſtung the Commonwealth.

VALERIUS.

The Gods
Have long bereav'd him of his better Judgment.
His Pow'r depended on the People's Favour;
When, like a Changeling, he avow'd himſelf
At once to be their mortal Enemy;
Reſum'd his native Arrogance, and heap'd
Mean wanton Inſults on the poor Plebeians.

HORATIUS.

What dire Effects of Inſolence and Luſt
Have we beheld!--What Scenes of Blood and Rapine!--
Scenes, which the Spirit of our Anceſtors
Would ne'er have ſuffer'd.

VALERIUS.

Rome inherits ſtill
That free-born Spirit, which our great Forefathers
Dauntleſs exerted in their Country's Cauſe.
So long as this prevails, brief will be found
The Date of lawleſs Pow'r.—Such is the Force
Of this high Principle, this godlike Frame;
That but a few, poſſeſt of it, ſuffice
To wreſt a Tyrant from his Throne; to looſe
The Bands of Kingdoms.—Where a ſingle BRUTUS,
A great PUBLICOLA, or COCLES lives,
No TARQUIN can be ſafe. Slaves, at their Call,
Rouz'd into Men, will daſh their Fetters from them;
And claim th' unalienable Rights of Nature.
Let us embrace, my Friend; and by the Manes
Of our immortal Grandſires ſwear, that we,
Like them, will raiſe the languiſhing Republic,
Or fall together in the bold Attempt.

HORATIUS.

I ſwear it ſolemnly, VALERIUS.
Let us, with Ardour, ſnatch the firſt Occaſion,
The firſt fair Handle, which, improv'd with Skill,
May cauſe a general Revolt.

VALERIUS.

I've heard,
Juſt heard a dreadful Rumour from the Camp:—
That not the Sabines, but the Sword of APPIUS
Has murder'd SICCIUS DENTATUS.

HORATIUS.

Hah!
Should that be true; nought but the Tyrant's Blood
Can glut our Rage.—Rome muſt avenge her Hero,
Her hoary Champion; in the Field of War
Highly diſtinguiſh'd for his matchleſs Valour:
Still more diſtinguiſh'd for his patriot Zeal
Againſt the Foes of Liberty.

VALERIUS.

'Twas that
Which kindled the Decemvir's ſubtle Wrath
A Legate's ſacred Function to confer.
This Bait of Honour took. The gallant Siccius,
Impatient to retrieve his Country's Glory,
Flew to the Camp; and periſh'd, as they ſay,
Devoted to the Sword of vile Aſſaſſins.—
If true, this Rumour will be quickly follow'd
By ſure Intelligence.

HORATIUS.

To know the Truth
Merits our firſt Attention. Let us go;—
Let us inquire.—Such an atrocious Deed
Suits our high Plot.

VALERIUS.

Now the great Wheels of Fate
Are all in Motion. Ev'ry Moment now
Teems with Events, ſuch as conſpire to quicken
The Courſe of mighty Revolutions.—Come.—[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter ICILIUS *and* CAMILLA.

ICILIUS.

How ſhe ſo much as dar'd to ſpeak her Errand,
Amazes me.—Did ſhe not know, CAMILLA,

That you had long ſupply'd a Mother's Place
To fair VIRGINIA; forming her to Virtue,
With honeſt Care?—Could ſhe believe that you
Would, for an infamous Reward, betray
Your ſacred Charge into the lewd Embrace
Of a foul Raviſher?—Abandon'd Wretch!

CAMILLA.

I bluſh to think that Nature can admit
A Woman ſo completely void of Shame.
She laugh'd at Honour: Virtue was her Sport:
Pow'r, Pleaſure, Wealth her only Theme of Praiſe.—
Impatient of her wild licentious Talk,
I ſternly bid her ceaſe to violate
A Houſe where Chaſtity, where ſpotleſs Honour
Had ever dwelt.

ICILIUS.

Can'ſt thou not gueſs, CAMILLA,
Who this Patrician is, that madly ſeeks
To graſp the Portion of ICILIUS,
My much-lov'd Bride, in his polluted Arms?

CAMILLA.

She magnify'd his Pow'r; extoll'd his Rank,
His Wealth, his Honours. Laviſh of her Words,
At length ſhe titled him the Prince of Rome.---
I mention'd APPIUS.---At the very Name
She ſeem'd to ſtart, as conſcious of an Error;
But, while ſhe ſtrongly labour'd to remove
My firſt Suſpicion, ſhe the more confirm'd it.

ICILIUS.

'Tis he.---Confuſion! does not the Decemvir
Know that to me the Virgin is betroth'd?---
Am I ſo cheap in his Opinion grown,
So fit to bear Indignities; that he
Shall dare, ev'n in his ſecret Wiſh, to blaſt

My

My bridal Honours?---Heav'n ſo ſpeed my Love
As he ſhall rue the bold Conception;---rue
Such Inſolence of Hope.

CAMILLA.

I fear, alas!
Some dreadful Act of Violence.

ICILIUS.

Of Force
He dares not think; ſince well he knows VIRGINIUS
Commands a Legion, and is highly lov'd
By both our Armies in the Field.—Me too
The Tyrant knows; and, if I ſhould ſay, fears,
Rome would not mark me for an idle Boaſter.

CAMILLA.

What will not Tyranny, the Pride of Pow'r,
The Rage of Luſt attempt?

ICILIUS.

Although, CAMILLA,
Fear is an Alien to my Soul, thus threaten'd,
I'll join to Courage wary Circumſpection;
And, ſtrait convening all my Friends, prepare
Force to repel, ſhould Force preſume to lift
His ruffian Hand.—Haſte to my Fair One!--Hide
This Plot of Shame.---Wear not that Look of Sorrow,
Leſt it ſhould rouze Conjecture.---Urge my Paſſion,
To thee beſt known.---Its vehement Increaſe
Thou well haſt mark'd, 'till grafted on Eſteem,
It reſts and glories in ſupreme Perfection.—
O teach her too ſtrongly to feel the Charms
Of mutual Love:—to glow, CAMILLA, teach her
With chaſte Deſire and bridal Expectations.—
Haſte.—As you both are wont, repair at Noon
To PORTIA's Houſe. I'll meet VIRGINIA there.—

CAMILLA.

What if we ſhould apprize VIRGINIUS?

ICILIUS.

No;

Not yet. 'Twould give him needleſs Pain.

CAMILLA.

Farewell.— [*Exit.*

Fate with the Genius and the Gods of Rome
Now ſits in Council.—'Tis their ſecret Force,
Their Wrath which in the Breaſt of APPIUS kindles
Such a wild Flame.—Barely to dream of Hopes,
Argues him utterly bereft of Reaſon.—
Succeed!—It is impoſſible.—This Arm,
Rais'd in the Cauſe of Love, would ſingly baffle
His utmoſt Pow'r: Then how ſhall he withſtand
A People's Rage?—Do I not ſee VALERIUS
Paſs in the Forum, with HORATIUS, yonder?—
I'll follow them with rapid Pace. They firſt
Shall know this infamous and bold Attempt;
So fit to rouze the public Indignation.—
Now Vengeance hovers o'er the Tyrant's Head.—[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Scene the Palace of APPIUS.

APPIUS.

No longer Love;—'tis Madneſs that I feel:
For ſince that more than mortal Blaze of Beauty,
Like Heav'n's reſiſtleſs Flame, firſt ſmote my Sight;—
I have not ſlept.—Incurable Deſire
Burns, like a Fever, in my Blood.—At length
I muſt have Eaſe from racking Miſery;
This Rage of unquench'd Appetite.—To-day

Love's

Love's Triumph comes: in the full Feaſt of Fancy,
VIRGINIA's Charms.—If all-procuring Gold,
If ſweet Perſuaſion fail, the Vultur Force
Shall boldly ſeize her in his mighty Talons,
And bear the trembling Victim to my Bed:—
But MARCUS CLAUDIUS is return'd.—

SCENE IV.

Enter MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

—What Hopes
Of ſweet Succeſs? What Tidings doſt thou bring?
Speak; is CAMILLA gain'd to ſerve my Paſſion?

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

CAMILLA ſtrangely baffles all our Art.
Not for the World would ſhe commit a Treſpaſs
Againſt her ſimple Honeſty.

APPIUS.

Confuſion!
What artleſs Inſtrument haſt thou employ'd
To practiſe on her with ſeducing Gifts?—
Was it thy boaſted Inſtrument, SEMPRONIA?

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

One lives not, APPIUS, fitter to corrupt
All Senſe of Honour in the Minds of Women.
She bade her freely name her own Conditions;
Aſſuring her that fair VIRGINIA's Lover
Would in his Bounty, like a Prince, exceed them.

APPIUS.

Vain unavailing Promiſes! ſhe ſhould
At once have offer'd ample Sums of Gold.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

She did:—Sums that would tempt VALERIUS
To quit his ſtubborn Principles; to bend

Beneath

Beneath thy Scepter. By repeated Handfuls,
She pour'd the ſhining Offer in her Lap.

APPIUS.

Sure that was irreſiſtible.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

With Scorn,
Her proud Integrity rejected all.
Forſooth ſhe anſwer'd that ſhe was a Roman;
And would not, for the Wealth of APPIUS,
Betray her Truſt.

APPIUS.

Her Mention of my Name
Shews that on me ſhe faſtens her Suſpicion:—
But I regard her not. Since mild Attempts
Prove unſucceſsful here, I'll have Recourſe
To ſudden Means of Violence.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

For that
A Project is already form'd.

APPIUS.

What Project?

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

I'll ſeize and to my Houſe the Fair One lead.—
Should her Relations, ſhould the boiſt'rous Bridegroom
Oppoſe this Act, I'll next appeal to you;
For I have fram'd ſo plauſible a Story,
Yourſelf would half believe it.—Such my Scheme.

APPIUS.

Fly to accompliſh it: for by the Gods
I cannot brook Delay.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

About this Hour
VIRGINIA thro' the Forum daily paſſes.
I'll watch and ſeize her.

APPIUS.

APPIUS.

With my Lictors ſtrait,
And with my young patrician Guard, I'll haſten
To my Tribunal.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

Soon expect me there.— [*Exit.*

APPIUS.

The Voice of Reaſon calls aloud:—"Forbear.
"If not the ſacred Cauſe of Innocence;
"Let Fear reſtrain thee from this brutal Action.
"Shun TARQUIN's Fate."—Aſſoon might Reaſon ſtill
The boiſt'rous Sea, or check the Whirlwind's Courſe,
As ſtem this Torrent of Deſire, which ſwells
Above all Bounds, ſcorning the frail Obſtructions
Which Fear or Fancy forms.—

SCENE V.

Enter a MESSENGER.

Say, Roman;---whence?

MESSENGER.

From Algidum.---Your Colleagues the Decemvirs,
Have ſent me to report the ſhameful Tidings
Of their Defeat.

APPIUS.

Have then the Legions fled?

MESSENGER.

The angry Legions were reſolv'd to fly:
For, at the firſt Appearance of the Æqui,
They ſuddenly forſook their Camp.

APPIUS.

Perdition!
Reſign their Camp!---Baſe and degenerate;---
Their ſullen Anceſtors, who likewiſe dar'd
To ſhame themſelves with a ſeditious Flight,

Yet

Yet ſcorn'd this groſſer Infamy; reſerv'd,
By Fate, for a ſtill viler Race of Romans.---
Theſe mean, audacious, angry Fugitives;
Of what do they complain?

MESSENGER.

I fear to tell it.

APPIUS.

Think not that I regard their factious Murmurs:
But freely ſpeak; what Reaſon give they?

MESSENGER.

This.
Gall'd by the Yoke of lawleſs Tyranny,
They will not fight for Servitude and Chains.

APPIUS.

Go back: Say to my Colleagues the Decemvirs,
I charge them, for a laudable Example
Worthy their Imitation, to reflect
With what Severity my noble Father
Chaſtiz'd the Legions under his Command;
When, in a ſtubborn and rebellious Mood,
They fled, like Cowards, to diſgrace their Leader.---
Traitors!---Why ſleeps the decimating Ax?
Aſk the Decemvirs that.---Go; tell them; APPIUS,
Sick of their fooliſh Lenity, requires
Stern military Juſtice in its Rigour.---

MESSENGER.

Stern Juſtice and the decimating Ax!---
Vain Words, Decemvir.---Military Juſtice,
The Terror and the Threats of Diſcipline
Muſt now ſubmit to military Rage. [*Aſide, and Exit.*

APPIUS.

And wilt thou leave me, fickle Fortune?---Stay.
With a rich Price I bought thy fleeting Favour;
When, for a Tyrant's Name, my ſolid Peace

I poorly

I poorly barter'd.---This bold Mutiny,
(Curſe on the Legions!) this rebellious Flight
Is full of ruinous Preſage.---It threatens
To-morrow with ſome dreadful dire Event.---
Then let To-morrow fear.---The preſent Day
Comes furniſh'd with a more delightful Taſk.---
Away with future, with To-morrow Chances:
Love reigns To-day.---Perhaps VIRGINIA
By this Time waits at my Tribunal. Haſte,
Haſte, APPIUS; fly to ſeize the proffer'd Bliſs.---
I'm ſick of Pow'r: 'tis Vanity, Vexation.
Henceforth my Lot (hear my Petition, JOVE)
My Portion henceforth be the Bliſs of Love. [*Exit.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Scene the Forum.

SICINIUS, DUELLIUS, POMPONIUS, *and Plebeians.*

SICINIUS.

MUST this Tribunal, this opprobrious Seat
Of inſolent Oppreſſion, ſtand for ever?
To what, O Rome, to what a ſhameful Bondage
Art thou reduc'd?

DUELLIUS.

Our Hopes, SICINIUS,
The final Hopes of Rome and Liberty
Chiefly depend on the two great Patricians,
VALERIUS and HORATIUS. Next to them,
ICILIUS, late our moſt diſtinguiſh'd Tribune,
Forbids us to deſpair.

POMPONIUS.

Let me but live
To ſee the Tribuneſhip reſtor'd (that Bulwark
Which, to ſecure the native Rights of Freemen,
Our Fathers rais'd)---and I deſire no more.

DUELLIUS.

POMPONIUS, yes; now that the People's Voice
Grows loud for Liberty; the Tribunes here
Shall quickly reaſſume their ſacred Office;---
An active bold ICILIUS at their Head.
He, well approv'd in former high Diſputes,
Can beſt enforce our old Agrarian Claim,
Our Right to ſhare the conquer'd Lands.---On him
My Suffrage waits.

SICINIUS.

SICINIUS.

And mine, DUELLIUS,

POMPONIUS.

And mine.

DUELLIUS.

He claims the Suffrages of all:
What ſay ye, Fellow-Citizens and Friends?

PLEBEIANS.

ICILIUS, ICILIUS, ICILIUS.——

SCENE II.

Enter APPIUS *and Lictors.*

APPIUS.

Say, whence this Uproar?---Wherefore is the Name
Of turbulent ICILIUS ſhouted?——Peace,
Ye Sons of Faction, Peace. [*He goes to the Tribunal.*

SICINIUS.

With what unbluſhing Arrogance he treats
His free-born Fellow-Citizens?

DUELLIUS.

Obſerve,
There is a ſtrange Diſorder in his Viſage.

POMPONIUS.

Now mark his eager Look!

APPIUS.

VIRGINIA comes! [*Aſide.*

SCENE III.

Enter NUMITORIUS, MARCUS CLAUDIUS *leading* VIRGINIA, *and* CAMILLA *clinging to her Arm.*

VIRGINIA.

Save, NUMITORIUS! dear CAMILLA, ſave me
From this bold Man!

NUMITORIUS.

NUMITORIUS.

Unheard-of Inſolence!
My Siſter's Child a Slave!

CAMILLA.

Help, Romans! Help!
O do not ſuffer this abandon'd Ruffian,
Here in the Forum, in the Face of Day,
With lawleſs Force to rob theſe feeble Arms
Of what is dearer to me than my Life.

APPIUS.

What mean'ſt thou, Woman, in thy frantic Rage?
Is there no Judge of Injuries in Rome,
That thus to the low Rabble thou prefer'ſt
The Voice of thy Complaint?

CAMILLA.

O Man of Pow'r,
Let me adjure thee by the mighty Gods
To ſpare my Child!

APPIUS.

Art thou the Virgin's Mother?

CAMILLA.

Indeed I am not; yet I ſtrongly feel
A Parent's Love.

NUMITORIUS.

My Siſter NUMITORIA,
While yet her Daughter was an Infant, dy'd;
But this fond faithful Matron ever ſince
Has been a ſecond Parent to her.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

APPIUS,
I have a Maſter's Title to VIRGINIA;
For ſhe is Daughter to a Slave of mine:
As ſuch I ſeiz'd her.

CAMILLA.

CAMILLA.

Find ICILIUS:
For Heav'n's ſake haſte, DUELLIUS: find him, bring him.
Go firſt to PORTIA's Houſe: there he propos'd
At Noon to meet us. [*Exit* DUELLIUS.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

To her native Home
I would have carry'd her by gentle Means,
Had not Camilla, conſcious of my Right,
Rais'd by her Exclamations ſuch a Tumult,
That I was forc'd to fly for Juſtice here.

APPIUS.

Haſt thou ſufficient Evidence to prove
This ſtrange unlikely Claim?

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

More than ſufficient,
When that ſhall be requir'd. In the mean time,
I claim Poſſeſſion as a Maſter's Due.

NUMITORIUS.

VIRGINIA's Father, with his truſty Sword,
Serves in the Field againſt the hoſtile Æqui:
While he perhaps bleeds on the Bed of War,
In Rome's Defence, ſhall an audacious Coward,
A Drone of Peace, with mock Pretenſions, claim
His only Child?—Not 'till VIRGINIUS comes
Can Juſtice hear the ſhameleſs Cauſe;—far leſs
Grant that Deciſion which the well-known CLAUDIUS
For a vile Purpoſe ſeeks.—The Father abſent,
By Reaſon's Rule, his chaſte, his virgin Daughter,
Safe in her Fame and Freedom, muſt abide
Under my Roof;—a Kinſman's ſacred Roof.

APPIUS.

The Law ſupports your Adverſary's Plea.

NUMITORIUS.

Is not Poſſeſſion by the Law ſecur'd,
'Till he who boaſts a better Right obtains
A formal fair Deciſion in his Favour?

APPIUS.

How much the ſolid Liberties of Rome
Employ'd my Thoughts and Zeal, by me propos'd,
That very Law moſt fully witneſſes,
Shaming the Tongue of idle Defamation:
But then, then only, can the Law be deem'd
The Bulwark of our Rights, when its true Meaning,
Unwarp'd by looſe Interpretation, holds
An even Courſe, without reſpect of Perſons.—
Was the pretended Father preſent;—he
Would doubtleſs have the firſt and faireſt Claim:
Next him the Maſter's Title to Poſſeſſion
Takes place of all, ev'n of the neareſt Kindred.—
From me far be it, Romans, to refuſe,
Whatever Time they ſhall deem neceſſary,
To fetch the Father home: But that Delay
Shall not prevent a previous Act of Juſtice.—
Thus therefore I decree—that MARCUS CLAUDIUS,
Have what he legally demands, Poſſeſſion;
Plighting his Word, that when VIRGINIUS,
The Bondmaid's long reputed Father, comes,
She ſhall be ſtrait produc'd.——In evil Hour
(Deſtruction to my Hopes!) the jealous Bridegroom!

SCENE IV.

Enter ICILIUS *and* DUELLIUS.

Go, take Poſſeſſion, CLAUDIUS.

ICILIUS.

Hah! Poſſeſſion!——
Villain, ſtand off.

MARCUS

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

It is decreed, ICILIUS.

ICILIUS.

What is decreed?

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

That, 'till VIRGINIUS comes,
Mine is the Title to Poſſeſſion here.

[*Offers to ſeize* VIRGINIA.

ICILIUS.

If thou haſt any Fear of Death, retire.—
Away—be gone.

APPIUS.

Remove ICILIUS, Lictors.

ICILIUS.

Firſt take my Life, Decemvir. While I breathe,
Vain is your expectation to ſucceed
In this groſs Act of Tyranny; this Plot
So ſubtly fram'd, ſo carefully conceal'd
Under the Maſk of Law.—Tyrant, forbear,
Nor ſeek to ſpoil me of a Bridegroom's Right.
I mean a ſpotleſs Virgin to eſpouſe,
Not one defil'd by your rapacious Luſt.
What! is it not enough your bold Ambition
Has trampled under Foot the great Republic,
Our Conſuls, Tribunes, and our free Aſſemblies?
Shall not the Honour of our Wives and Children
Be ſafe, Decemvir, from your lewd Aſſaults?
This more than Tarquin-ſcheme of Violation,
Would make ev'n Babes and Women riſe in Arms,
If Heav'n and Men ſhould wink at it: Then ceaſe,
Or, thus attack'd, I'll rouze a Storm of Vengeance,
Which on the whole Decemvirate ſhall burſt.
Implacable VIRGINIUS ſhall advance,
With all the Legions at his Heels, to Rome;
And, while he blows the Trumpet of Revenge,

Where that iniquitous Tribunal ſtands,
Grim Havock and the Hounds of War ſhall feaſt
On human Sacrifice.

APPIUS.

Peace, wordy Boaſter.
Seize, bear her off.

ICILIUS.

Who but attempts to ſeize her,
Might ſafer ſeize the Tiger in his Den.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

To me your boiſt'rous Speech, ICILIUS,
Seems light as Air: It moves my Laughter. Thus,
I boldly thus aſſert my Right.

ICILIUS.

Retire.

APPIUS.

Aſſiſt him, Lictors.

ICILIUS.

Help, my Countrymen.

[MARCUS CLAUDIUS *and the Lictors, threatened by the People, retire.*

APPIUS.

You all perceive that turbulent ICILIUS
Labours to kindle high the Flame of Diſcord;
He hopes (I ſcan the Motive of his Heart)
To get the factious Tribuneſhip reſtor'd,
If he can raiſe a popular Sedition;
But I for this will leave him no Pretence.
The Virgin ſhall remain at Liberty,
'Till he who bears the Name of Father comes;
Provided that he comes To-day. From Rome
The Diſtance to the Gates of Algidum
Scarce for an Hour employs the Horſeman's Speed:—
Be this your Care; for, mark my Words, ICILIUS,

Before

Before yon Sun, which flames with mid-day Luſtre,
Has ſcatter'd from the Weſt his feeble Rays,
I will decide this Cauſe; and ſo decide it,
That neither you nor a rebellious Rabble
Shall dare to murmur at my Sentence. [*Exit.*

ICILIUS.

Tyrant,
I fear thee not. To me thy Menaces
Are arrogant as vain.—Hah! doom VIRGINIA
To Servitude and Infamy!—Decemvir,
If I could brook an Injury like this,
I were no Roman, but a Slave indeed.—
How fares it with my Love?

VIRGINIA.

As one juſt reſcu'd
From ſomething worſe than Death, I to the Gods
Devoutly render, as becomes me, Thanks:
Herein moſt happy, that Heav'n's Inſtrument
Is he for whom I chiefly would deſire
To lengthen Life. Accept my Thanks, ICILIUS,
All I have henceforth left to give; ſince thou
Mak'ſt me a Beggar in my poor Returns,
Already Lord of my Affections.

ICILIUS.

Hah!
This exquiſite Confeſſion of the Soul,
This ſudden Language of the Heart, now firſt
With Clearneſs utter'd, on my raviſh'd Ear,
Like Muſic, dwells. Divineſt of thy Sex!
Thy Words tranſport me to the wild Extreme
Of Raptures not to be deſcrib'd, of Bliſs
Too great for mortal Man.—Now, by the Gods,
I almoſt thank thee, Tyrant!

VIRGINIA.

Still I fear
The Storm of Danger is not wholly paſt.

ICILIUS.

He dares not hurt thee, for his Life.

VIRGINIA.

Alas!
That dreadful Man is void of Fear and Shame;
He laughs at Pity and the Tears of Women.—
My Father abſent too! Did he but know
What Danger threatens me, not the World's Empire
Would ſlacken his important Haſte to ſave me.

CAMILLA.

Think, think what's to be done, ICILIUS.

ICILIUS.

I'll ſend my Brother to the Camp.

NUMITORIUS.

My Son
Shall likewiſe go.

CAMILLA.

Let them, with eager Speed,
Fly; to prevent the Tyrant's Meſſengers.
There's not a Moment to be loſt: Away.——

ICILIUS.

Firſt from thy lovely Cheek O let me wipe
Thoſe precious Tears.—Thoſe Tears, VIRGINIA,
Shall coſt the Tyrant Blood.

NUMITORIUS.

Haſte, and return
Thy Bride to meet, ſecure from Violation
Under my Roof.

ICILIUS.

Thither I'll fly, my Fair One:
To ſooth thy Fears, to comfort, to protect thee,
Shall ſweetly then engroſs a Lover's Care. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Scene the Palace of APPIUS.

Enter APPIUS.

APPIUS.

Detected in my Plot!--Repuls'd!--Diſhonour'd!---
Upbraided groſly by Plebeians!---Now
Well may the gloomy, the remorſeful Fit
Of Conſcience come.---Abſurd!--Was this a Time
For idle, boyiſh Schemes of Love, while Fortune
Severely frowns, while Shame and Guilt diſtract me?—
The Legions in Uproar!--DENTATUS murder'd!—
Our Foes triumphant in the Field!---All Rome
Defil'd with Tears and Blood!---Am I the Cauſe?--
Is it to me the great Republic owes
Her foul Diſhonours and her ſlaughter'd Heroes?---
How ſhall I juſtify to Rome and Heaven
My Breach of Truſt and lawleſs Uſurpation?---
Am I a Traytor to my Country?---Hah!---
It is a dreadful Queſtion which I aſk
My conſcious Self.---Art thou not, APPIUS,
A groſs Oppreſſor? An inhuman Tyrant?---
I am.---The Woes of Life, together ſumm'd,
Would light appear, if weigh'd with this Reflection,
This ſingle Whiſper of the Mind.---

SCENE VI.

Enter MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

Hail, APPIUS!---
What means his mournful Attitude? He ſeems
Like one juſt ſmitten by the Thunderer's Arm;

While in his Looks ſits wild Aſtoniſhment,
And mars the Function of his Senſes.---APPIUS!—
Say, why this ſudden, this unſeemly Start?

APPIUS.

You come unwiſh'd for, at a dreadful Hour,
While I was ſumming up the long Account
Of all my Crimes.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

Away: I bluſh to hear it.

APPIUS.

Ah! Villain! Thou ſhould'ſt rather weep, to think
That thou haſt been the fatal Miniſter,
Whoſe Inſtigation and pernicious Counſels
Have made me what I am; a foul Reproach
To all my great Progenitors and Kindred,
A Scourge to Rome, a Terror to myſelf.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

Such poor, ſuch idle Thoughts as theſe betray
A Mind unequal to the Taſk of Empire.

APPIUS.

Guilt vainly triumphs in a borrow'd Maſk;
Vainly, the Face and Heart at Variance, ſeems
Poſſeſt of gay Tranquillity.--No, CLAUDIUS,
The vicious Man muſt feel the Rack of Conſcience:—
It is the Curſe of Nature and of Heaven.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

Reſign, reſign this lawleſs Dignity,
Which ſits ſo heavy on your peeviſh Conſcience.

APPIUS.

I ought; but wild Ambition hinders it:
Beſides I cannot now reſign with Safety.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

O yes, your Roman, your plebeian Judges,
Will doubtleſs be to mild Compaſſion mov'd,

When

When you for Mercy plead with humble Voice,
When the great Name of APPIUS CLAUDIUS
Shall meanly ſtoop to that.---Go, beg to live.

APPIUS.

Firſt ſhall they tear me in a thouſand Pieces,
And fix ſome Portion of my ſcatter'd Limbs
On ev'ry Gate and Battlement of Rome.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

Then boldly perſevere.

APPIUS.

I muſt.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

O Shame!
Is this a Time for ſuch Reflections, APPIUS,
Such gloomy Thinking, while Occaſion wooes you,
While it invites you to the Bed of Love
With ſweet Temptation?---Have you then forgot
The fair VIRGINIA's Charms?

APPIUS.

VIRGINIA!——
Mad Love rekindles at the very Name.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

And will you leave her, as a worthleſs Prey,
Untaſted to your Rival?

APPIUS.

By the Gods
You touch me in a tender Part, and move
The Maſter-wheel of all.——Thus, doubly fetter'd,
By ſtrong Ambition, and by ſtronger Love,
In vain I ſtruggle to get free.—Then ceaſe,
Thou foul infernal Viper of Remorſe,
To gnaw me with envenom'd Tooth.-What ſay'ſt thou?
Is ev'ry Thing diſpos'd as I commanded?

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

All, all.

APPIUS.

What of VIRGINIA's Father?

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

He never can eſcape the Snares of Horſemen,
Which I have poſted in his Way to Rome.

APPIUS.

But if he ſhould!———

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

Let us ſuppoſe he ſhould,
I find no Terror in his Preſence here:
The truſty Soldiers of the Capitol,
Plac'd round your high Tribunal in their Ranks,
Shall keep the grumbling Populace in Awe.
I laugh to think how the proud-tongu'd ICILIUS
Will vindicate the Honour of his Bride:
It will be perfect Luxury of Mirth,
To ſee that turbulent and haughty Boaſter,
Foaming and mad with unavailing Rage.

APPIUS.

The Hour approaches faſt. See that my Friends
All hold themſelves in Readineſs;—aſſur'd
That, or VIRGINIA muſt be mine To-day,
Or the Decemvirs fall. [*Exit.*

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

A Mixture ſtrange
Of Vice and Virtue! This imperfect Sinner,
Sins that he may repent; and then repents,
That he may ſin again.---What if he ſhould,
By ſuch wild Fits of Horror ſeiz'd, at laſt
Reſign his Power?---Where then ſhall I be?--Gods!
I muſt take care. My very Life depends
On his becoming, like myſelf, confirm'd
Againſt the Sallies of Remorſe and Shame.———

Here

Here Wiſdom can perceive no middle Courſe:
He ſhould be wholly good, or wholly bad.
A Prince like him, that either is by Halves,
Muſt ſoon, deſpis'd as well as hated, fall
To public Scorn and Rage an eaſy Victim.

[*Exit.*

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

Scene the Forum.

VIRGINIA, CAMILLA.

VIRGINIA.

BUT are we ſafe?---O ſweet Security,
The cloſe Companion of my guiltleſs Youth,
Now whither art thou fled?---Speak, are we ſafe?

CAMILLA.

Fear not, my Child: The chaſte DIANA's Temple,
With awful Neighbourhood, protects thee.

VIRGINIA.

Look,
From yonder Gate a Crowd of young Patricians
Here bend their Eyes.

CAMILLA.

'Tis the Decemvir's Palace,
To which theſe lawleſs Libertines reſort.

VIRGINIA.

And now forth iſſues MARCUS CLAUDIUS!
O ſave us from him, great DIANA, ſave us!

CAMILLA.

Fall ſwift Perdition on his Head.---But mark,
He goes, and all his lewd Companions follow.---
Nay, now compoſe thyſelf.

VIRGINIA.

ICILIUS,
Forgetful of my Danger and my Fears,
Why do'ſt thou linger thus! Unkindly linger?

CAMILLA.

CAMILLA.

Did you but know the paſſionate Requeſt
ICILIUS whiſper'd as he went, alas!
You would not tax him with the leaſt Unkindneſs:
He thus, oft deeply ſighing, ſpoke---" CAMILLA,
" While I to kindle Rage in ev'ry Boſom
" Labour, thine is a Mother's Province: She
" With filial Obſervation marks thy Words:
" For Heav'n's Sake comfort her. Let her not weep:
" At my Return let me not find her weeping,
" Or I perforce ſhall mingle Tears, and add
" Diſtraction to the gloomy Scene." This ſaid,
The manly Tear came ruſhing to his Eye,
Which ſtriving to conceal, he forthwith left me.

VIRGINIA.

Now lead, CAMILLA, to the ſacred Shrine
Of this great Virgin Goddeſs. There I'll kneel,
And waſh her Image with my Tears.

CAMILLA.

Behold,
ICILIUS comes.---

SCENE II.

Enter ICILIUS.

ICILIUS.

What doſt thou here, my Fair One?

VIRGINIA.

I go to worſhip in DIANA's Temple,
To weep, and, with religious Supplication,
Implore her Safeguard on this evil Day.

ICILIUS.

I muſt not diſapprove thy pious Errand.---
Religion is the faireſt, brighteſt Gem

That

That Woman wears. Unſeaſon'd with Religion,
She ſins againſt the great Deſign of Nature,
Which form'd for this her gentle Mind. Then wear it,
Wear the rich Jewel in thy Heart for ever:
But let me ſtill conjure thee to reſtrain
Thy boundleſs Fears. At length the People's Rage
Is up in thy Behalf, and vows Revenge
Againſt the brutal Tyrant.

VIRGINIA.

O beware
Of idle Hopes. Your Taſk ſhould rather be
To ſteel the tender Purpoſe of my Soul
With Roman Fortitude; that in the laſt,
The worſt of all Extremities, I may
Ev'n to my Life prefer my Virgin Honour.

ICILIUS.

A ſudden Horror, like the Gloom of Death,
O'erwhelms my Soul. My Sum of Happineſs
In thee ſo centers, that I dare not think
On what thy Fear ſuggeſts.

VIRGINIA.

Alas! What Truſt
Can I repoſe in Men who bear to ſee
Their Country ruin'd? Can I hope that ſuch
Will ſave me from the Tyrant, who themſelves
So tamely ſuffer his oppreſſive Yoke?---
Hah!--Hark!--A diſtant Shouting!--Hark, ICILIUS!--

ICILIUS.

It is the Clamour of the Multitude,
Whoſe Vengeance is a-foot; and, like a Lion
Eſcap'd from his unwary Keeper, roars
In ev'ry Street.---All, all is ſafe, VIRGINIA.

VIRGINIA.

O my poor Father!

ICILIUS.

ICILIUS.

Doubt not he will come.

VIRGINIA.

Laſt Night methought I ſaw him in my Sleep;
Ay me! How chang'd in his Appearance!---Pale,
Grim, ghaſtly were his Looks.---His upcaſt Eyes
With Heav'n expoſtulating ſtood; while Tears,
Faſt-flowing o'er his manly Cheeks, bedew'd
The trembling Earth.---As for an only Child,
He mourn'd: for oft the viſionary Father
Utter'd my Name, in Bitterneſs of Anguiſh.---
'Tis Horror inexpreſſible to think
Of what I felt. The dire Impreſſion ſtill
Shakes my whole Frame.

ICILIUS.

Fear is alone the Cauſe;
That Things of no Significance alarm
Thy ſick Imagination.---Ceaſe to tremble.---
Believe the Danger paſt.

VIRGINIA.

It is not Life,
Nor its gay Bloom, for which I tremble thus;
Tho' Nature bids me prize them dearly. No.
Should it ſo pleaſe all-ruling Providence,
That only Death can ſave me from Diſhonour;---
Go Life, and all my blooming Proſpects vaniſh.
I will not ſtain, with an unſeemly Tear,
A Victim offer'd to the Will of Heaven,
On Virtue's Altar.---Not a Sigh, CAMILLA,
No weak, no womaniſh Complaint ſhall mar
This truely Roman Sacrifice:---An Act,
Which Virtue, which the Dignity of Woman,
The ſacred Honour of my Sex requires.---
While ſuch high Motives claim my great Attention,

Away

Away with ev'ry low Regard;---away
With little Self: it weighs not in the Balance;
Or weighs like the vile Duſt, which Reaſon's Breath
Blows lightly from the partial Scale.---To die!
What is it but to pay the Debt of Nature:
A common Debt which all, without Diſtinction,
Pay when Heav'n wills?--I fear not Death, ICILIUS:--
But when I think on my lov'd Father's Grief;
On that diſtreſsful Scene of mingled Woe,
Which his, which your's, and which CAMILLA's heart
Muſt jointly ſhare:---I tremble at the Thought.
Reaſon commands my Tears.

ICILIUS.

The mighty Gods,
Who make the ſacred Cauſe and Friends of Virtue
Their moſt peculiar Care, will ſave VIRGINIUS
From ev'ry mournful Accident. Then truſt
In their Protection; in the chaſte DIANA's
Securely truſt.---

VIRGINIA.

Your manly Conſolation
Prevails at laſt. It wakes a ſudden Hope.---
My Father's matchleſs Merit;---his whole Life,
Unblemiſh'd with a ſingle Act that errs
From Virtue's Courſe:---O this, if Virtue claims
The Favour of the Gods, on him will draw
Their juſt Protection down; on APPIUS
Hot Wrath and high Rebuke.

ICILIUS.

Like the gay Sun,
Quick darting thro' the Clouds, which veil'd his Luſtre,
Thy Beauty, from Diſtreſs and Horror free'd,
Beams forth and blazes on my Sight.---O thus,---
Look thus, my Fair.---That heav'nly Smile recalls

My

My baniſh'd Bliſs; and, rouz'd by Sympathy,
Joy ſparkles in CAMILLA's Cheek.—VALERIUS,
Rome's nobleſt Son, the Dread of the Decemvirs,
Moves this Way.

CAMILLA.

Come.

ICILIUS.

Myſelf will follow ſtrait;
Devoutly breathing Supplications.

CAMILLA.

Come.—

[*Exeunt* VIRGINIA *and* CAMILLA.

ICILIUS.

To ſuch a wild Exceſs I doat upon her,
That I can hardly brook a Moment's Abſence.
It ſeems a long Suſpenſe of Being; ſeems
A Pauſe in Life.---

SCENE III.

Enter VALERIUS.

VALERIUS.

Was it thy Bride, ICILIUS,
That parted hence, and ſuddenly retir'd
Into DIANA's Temple?

ICILIUS.

'Twas VIRGINIA.

VALERIUS.

Her Beauty, which ſurpaſſes all Deſcription,
Seems the fair Bloſſom of an early Youth.---
Has he no Shame, this utter Foe to Virtue;
No Reverence of human Nature in him:--
That he ſuch lovely tender Innocence
Would make a Victim to his brutal Luſt?

ICILIUS.

But ſhall we ſuffer him?

VALERIUS.

We muſt not;---will not.

ICILIUS.

Let but the great VALERIUS and HORATIUS
Appear, and give the Signal of Revolt;---
All, all is ready for an Inſurrection.

VALERIUS.

Forbid it all the Gods that ſuch as we
Should, while the great majeſtic Cauſe of Country
For Action calls; remain at ſluggiſh Eaſe,
Deaf to the Summons.---Know, what Rome demands
In us ſhall meet with no Delay.

ICILIUS.

Farewell.---
I'll haſten to conduct VIRGINIA
To PORTIA's Houſe. That done, my ſudden Taſk
Shall be to find and fire the chief Plebeians.
Your very Names will animate their Rage,
And chear their Hopes.--- [*Exit.*

VALERIUS.

Let the Decemvir now
Reſiſt us, if he can. The great Occaſion,
Which we have long deſir'd, is come at laſt.---
It is a Woman's Cauſe; an injur'd Woman's:
The ſame which free'd our Fathers from the Yoke
Of TARQUIN and of Kings.---Shall APPIUS,
Shall a Decemvir, ſhall a private Man,
For he's no more, do, with Impunity,
What ev'n in Kings the Romans would not bear?---
At length, Rome, thy Deliverance is nigh.
The Props of Tyranny begin to ſhake.

Soon muſt they fall.---HORATIUS comes.---
He ſeems diſturb'd.---

SCENE IV.

Enter HORATIUS.

HORATIUS.

I bring thee News, VALERIUS.
The Legions in the Field againſt the Sabines
Have made a foul diſorderly Retreat;
Quite to the Neighbourhood of Rome.

VALERIUS.

I gueſs
That their Retreat was quick and voluntary.

HORATIUS.

Ay, ſuch indeed.

VALERIUS.

'Tis ſcarcely yet an Hour
Since we receiv'd Advice from Algidum;
That there the mutinous and angry Legions
Had left their Camp and Baggage to the Foe.
This brave, this honourable Flight, HORATIUS,
Is ſuch a ſhining and exalted Proof
Of truely Roman Magnanimity,
That After-Generations ſhall extoll it
Above the higheſt Trophies of our Fathers.

HORATIUS.

Alas! The Terror of the Roman Name
Is vilely ſunk.---Our ancient Glory dwindles:
For lo the Nations which, in former Times,
Were us'd to tremble at our near Approach;
Diſdaining, like their Anceſtors, to wage
A timid and reſpectful War; advance

Ev'n to the Gates of Rome, and boldly pitch
Their hoſtile Tents under the ſacred Brow
Of JOVE, reſiding in the Capitol.

VALERIUS.

Hence ſee what different Effects ariſe
From Servitude and Freedom in a State.
The martial Spirit of our Countrymen
Is ſtill the ſame:---But why ſhould Romans fight?

HORATIUS.

Hah! Well obſerv'd. Why ſhould they fight indeed;
When not the Glory of the Commonwealth,
Nor Strife for high Renown impels their Swords
Upon the Foe; but Infamy and Chains
Await the Victors.

VALERIUS.

Now that Victory
Would ſtrengthen Tyrants in their Uſurpation;
Theſe Tidings of Defeat are joyful Tidings.

SCENE V.

Re-enter ICILIUS.

ICILIUS.

HORATIUS, hail.--News from the Camp, VALERIUS.
My Brother TITUS is return'd. I found,
I left him in DIANA's Temple.

VALERIUS.

Say,
What News?

ICILIUS.

He ſaw the Father of VIRGINIA
Spring from the Camp, born on a nimble Steed,
Which ſeem'd, as conſcious of the Rider's Haſte,
To riſe with Pinions in his rapid Motion.

VALERIUS.

VALERIUS.

Whence comes it that the News of his Departure
Should thus out-ride himſelf?

ICILIUS.

He was advis'd
To ſhun the neareſt Way, the publick Road;
Leſt Snares ſhould intercept him.

VALERIUS.

Are the Legions
Now ripe for a Revolt?

ICILIUS,

Their Indignation,
Scarcely before confin'd, a ſudden Cauſe
Inflames to Mutiny.

VALERIUS.

What Cauſe?

ICILIUS.

A Meſſage,
Come from the Legions in the Sabine Land,
Where Tumult rages higher ſtill, confirms
The firſt Report; that SICCIUS DENTATUS,
Rome's matchleſs Chief, her Thunderbolt in Arms,
Surpriz'd by foul Aſſaſſination fell;
Not by the Foe.

VALERIUS.

Gods! Is that certain Truth?
Did then the Cowards under his Command
Reſign their Leader up to vile Aſſaſſins?

ICILIUS.

His Party was a choſen Gang of Traitors.
'Twas they that murder'd him.---Not unreveng'd
Great SICCIUS fell.

VALERIUS.

Alas! What could he do,
Arm'd with a ſingle Spear, againſt ſuch Odds?

ICILIUS.

He, with a ſingle Spear, ſeem'd, in his Rage,
A Match for all.---Such Wonders he perform'd,
That ſimple Truth ſhall, like a Poet's Fiction,
Be to the Tales of Hercules compar'd.
Death was in ev'ry Blow. The Slain, in Heaps,
Before him preſs'd the bloody Ground.---At length,
(O Rome, bluſh here for thy degen'rate Sons!)
The Daſtards, from a Rock behind him, threw
Large Fragments on his hoary Head.---Then dropp'd
His manly Spear, the Pride of Battle; quell'd
By ſuch vile Weapons, and the War of Women.---
A Band of Soldiers, urg'd by ſtrong Suſpicions,
Which Rumour favour'd, hy'd them to the Place
Where their great Champion lay.--Fall'n on his Shield!
His Helmet off; and his unſightly Wounds
Bare to the Eye!---No Veſtige of a Sabine!--
No Roman ſtript!---Shameleſs, without a Maſk,
Pale Murder had uſurp'd the Field of War.---
Strait they return'd; in Funeral Proceſſion,
Bearing his lifeleſs Body on their Shields.---

HORATIUS.

Were not the baſe Aſſaſſins ſeiz'd and ſlain?--
Were they not hew'd in Pieces by the Legions?

ICILIUS.

Their ſudden, ſtrange, and wonderful Eſcape
Has turn'd to Certainty Suſpicion's Gueſs
About the ſole Contriver.

HORATIUS.

HORATIUS.

SICCIUS,

Thy Zeal for Liberty, thy noble Zeal
Has been the Cauſe of this.

VALERIUS.

The Curſe of Tyrants,
The Sum and Eſſence of their Miſery
Lies here:---Worth is their neceſſary Foe;
And they the mortal Foes of Worth.

HORATIUS.

Why loiter
The Legions in the Field? Why not return
To Rome at once, and execute their Vengeance?

ICILIUS.

Nought but the military Oath reſtrains them.
They fear it would offend the Gods.

HORATIUS.

What Oath
Can bind a Roman Citizen or Soldier
To ſerve the lawleſs Tyrants of his Country?
It is a vain and idle Superſtition.

ICILIUS.

Of that the Legions will be ſoon convinc'd.

VALERIUS.

Then now the Dawn of Liberty begins.
There is a general Conſpiracy
Againſt the Yoke of the Decemvirs.

HORATIUS.

Gods!
Why ſhould the Gloom of Tyranny be lengthen'd
An Hour beyond its Time? Let us appear,
And give the Signal ſtrait, VALERIUS.

VALERIUS.

Not 'till the Father of VIRGINIA comes.
His Preſence and his Cauſe will kindle Rage;

And bid Commotion, like an angry Flood,
Wildly ſurmounting Obſtacles, o'erwhelm
This Guilt of Pow'r; that infamous Tribunal
Where, in Contempt of Heav'n and human Vengeance,
Oppreſſion laughs; where ſportful Tyranny,
Mad with Succeſs, hatches lewd Violation
Under the Name of Law.--We'll meet you there;
Prone, as Occaſion ſhall direct, ICILIUS,
To guide or mingle in the Storm.---Farewell. [*Exeunt.*

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Scene the Houſe of NUMITORIUS.

ICILIUS.

TWO rival Paſſions in my Boſom burn:
For Rome the firſt.---This early from my Child-
hood,
Shot deep its Sparks into my Nature.---This
Reigns, as a Queen; juſtly ſupreme o'er all.---
The ſecond is a fierce and gen'rous Flame,
Which Beauty kindled; which Eſteem increaſes,
And Hope now feeds with Extaſy.---She comes.---

SCENE II.

Enter VIRGINIA.

ICILIUS.

O faireſt among Women, wiſe and good,
Not leſs than fair, my bleſt Imagination
Was full of thee; was full of ſweet Deſires;
Of joyful Expectations full. Thy Father.---

VIRGINIA.

Return'd, ICILIUS.

ICILIUS.

Ev'ry Moment now
Bids us expect thy Father's wiſh'd Arrival.

VIRGINIA.

O much he tarries!---Since your Brother TITUS
Aſſur'd us of his near Approach, in vain,

A tedious

A tedious Hour is fully waſted.——Hah!---
What if the Tyrant's Emiſſaries——

ICILIUS.

Fear not.
Warn'd of the Risk, he tempers Speed with Caution,
Chuſing the ſafeſt, not the neareſt Way.

VIRGINIA.

Would he were come: I ſhould be then at Eaſe.

ICILIUS.

I feel a Joy too powerful for Expreſſion,
When I but think how faſt my Bliſs approaches.
Has he not promis'd that his firſt Return
Shall crown my Wiſh, and make thee mine for ever?

VIRGINIA.

He little thought, ICILIUS, going hence,
That, while the Sword of War was yet unſheath'd,
He ſhould become a Debtor to his Promiſe.

ICILIUS.

For that am I beholden to the Tyrant;——
Whoſe vain Attempt is but a Spur to Time,
Haſt'ning the nuptial Hour.—Prepare, my Love,
To bind thy Temples with the holy Chaplet,
And let the Veil be ready to put on.
My bridal Bed, impatient to receive thee,
Aſſumes its Ornaments: The God of Marriage
Comes, with his Torches flaming in his Hand.
At length the dear, the long-expected Day——

VIRGINIA.

Why,—why ſuch wond'rous Haſte, ICILIUS?
Have I not oft adviſ'd you to reflect
Upon my young and unexperienc'd Age?
Nor think it maiden Baſhfulneſs, the Speech
Of a coy Virgin, utter'd to diſguiſe
Her glowing Heart:---Far leſs believe it Coldneſs.---

That

That I ſhould liſten to your ardent Vows,
My Father will'd. How much my ſecret Soul
Approv'd his Choice!——No more your Friend,
CAMILLA,
Needs to your anxious Ear diſcloſe in Whiſpers:—
Have not my Words confirm'd it?——After that,
Beware of idle Doubts and Jealouſy;
They juſtly would offend.——Your Love ſincere
I duely prize:—But, taught by your Example,
By your Diſcourſe admoniſh'd, I would gain,
As the ſole Pledge of durable Affection,
Gain and preſerve your rational Eſteem.——
For this great Purpoſe, yet a little longer
Leave,—to CAMILLA's wiſe Inſtruction leave me.

ICILIUS.

Were Heav'n's high Model in a Lover's Power,
I would not wiſh thee, Fair One, otherwiſe
Than as thou art; ſo perfect do'ſt thou ſeem
In Beauty, Wiſdom, and in ev'ry Gift
Which Nature's utmoſt Prodigality
Can laviſh on the Sex.

VIRGINIA.

Dazzled by Love,
You view me with a partial Eye.

ICILIUS.

No more.—
Why wilt thou dally with my fond Affection?

VIRGINIA.

In Life's great School a neceſſary Novice—

ICILIUS.

Thou haſt no need of that ſlow Tutor, Time.
So well has Nature taught thee, that old Age
Might come and liſten to thy wiſer Youth:
Then do not marvel if my boundleſs Paſſion,

High-

High-fed with Hope, now ſpurns at all Reſtraint:---
Like a young Steed, rouz'd by the Voice of War,
The Trumpet's ſilver Voice; ſick of Delay,
He, with impatient Fierceneſs, paws the Ground,
And pants for Tumult, for the Rage of Battle.---
To-day;—this very Day, VIRGINIA——
O have I thy Conſent?—Indeed thou muſt;—
Nay, nay;—thou wilt conſent.

VIRGINIA.

Well then, to-day,—
Should you but win my Father's Approbation,—
Believe me not averſe.—

ICILIUS.

Thy Father comes.—

SCENE III.

Enter VIRGINIUS.

All hail, VIRGINIUS! hail!

VIRGINIUS.

My Child! My Child!

VIRGINIA.

The Gods have heard my Pray'r. O welcome! welcome!

VIRGINIUS.

Come to my Boſom: Let me hold thee faſt.
Who, who ſhall tear thee from a Father's Boſom?

VIRGINIA.

The Danger now is paſt: My Fears are vaniſh'd.

VIRGINIUS.

Perdition on the Tyrant! Could he think,
Gods! did the Monſter hope that, while I liv'd,
His Luſt ſhould triumph o'er thy ſacred Honour;
And drag thee, like a Proſtitute, a Slave,

To his adult'rous Bed?—O thou vile APPIUS,
Thy raſh preſumptuous Hope ſhall coſt thee dear.

ICILIUS.

The Ruin of the whole Decemvirate
Can barely ſatisfy my Thirſt of Vengeance:
We'll give a Looſe to Rage.

VIRGINIUS.

Weak Birds and Beaſts,
If they but ſee their little ones in Danger,
Forget their Fear; and, urg'd by ſtronger Inſtinct,
Reſiſt the Foe. Shall then a Soldier's Child
Be raviſh'd from him with Impunity?
O, by the Gods, I hunger for Revenge,
I thirſt for Blood;---the Blood of APPIUS.

VIRGINIA.

By the much-honour'd Manes of my Mother,
Let me beſeech you to compoſe yourſelf.

VIRGINIUS.

There haſt thou wak'd a Paſſion in my Breaſt,
Which, were I calm as Death on this Occaſion,
Would kindle and arouze my ſleepy Rage.
Did'ſt thou not name thy Mother? Witneſs Heav'n,
I lov'd her much; beyond Expreſſion lov'd her.

VIRGINIA.

Granting my fond Requeſt, oft has CAMILLA
Recounted all the Wonders of your Love;
While faſt the tender and infectious Tear
Stole from our Eyes.

VIRGINIUS.

How greatly was I bleſt!
I will indulge the dear, the ſad Remembrance.
The Gods, in framing NUMITORIA,
Were ſurely laviſh of their Skill; and made her
Such as our fond Imagination pictures

The fair immortal Deities of Heaven:
O ſhe was all Perfection.

VIRGINIA.

Doubtleſs ſhe
Beheld you with an equal Share of Fondneſs.

VIRGINIUS.

Nay, there was ſomething more than Love between us:
It was a Flame, an Extaſy of Friendſhip;
Akin to the delightful Intercourſe
Of Heroes in the Fields of Bliſs.---Too ſoon,
Alas! too ſoon the happy Scene was o'er.
Heav'n ſnatch'd her from me, while the Prime of Youth
Retain'd its higheſt Luſtre on her Cheek.
But reſt aſſur'd of this, VIRGINIA,
So long as I have Memory, no Time
Shall ever raze her Image from my Heart.

VIRGINIA.

But why ſuch endleſs Sorrow? Will the Gods,
Mov'd by your Tears, reſtore her to the Light?
Could Tears recall my Mother from the Dead,
My filial Eyes ſhould never ceaſe from weeping,
'Till they had charm'd her back.

VIRGINIUS.

The Hand of Heaven,
Which from the Huſband took his dearer Half,
Yet did not leave the Father comfortleſs.---
It left a Child, an only Child, ICILIUS,
This young but perfect Image of her Mother;
Whom NUMITORIA, with her dying Breath,
Committed to my Charge; beſeeching me
To do the Office of a double Parent.---
Hah! Shall the Child of NUMITORIA,
The Fruit, the Pledge, the Relick of her Love,
Be made a Prey to the Decemvir's Luſt?---

Made

Made a vile Concubine?---O this would beggar
All my fair Hopes at once.---The very Thought
Diſtracts my Brain, and rouzes me to Madneſs.

VIRGINIA.

I tremble to behold you thus, my Father.

VIRGINIUS.

I've been to blame:---But how can I reflect,
How bear to think what Pain, what Agonies
Thou muſt have felt, when the laſcivious Judge
Doom'd thee to Servitude?—Then didſt thou weep,
And vainly call upon thy diſtant Father:
Thy Father heard thee not; but Heav'n, my Child,
Heav'n did not leave me deſtitute of Friends.

VIRGINIA.

Vain would have been all other Hopes of Safety,
Had not ICILIUS come.

VIRGINIUS.

What Recompence,
What Thanks, ICILIUS, ſhall a Father give
To him who ſav'd his Child?

ICILIUS.

I merit none.
If ſuch an Action, void of ev'ry View
But Virtue's Motive, is in very Deed
Its own Reward, and fills the Heart with Joy,
How bleſt the Doer, when inſpir'd by Love?
There is, in Truth, a Boon which I would aſk.

VIRGINIUS.

O freely ſpeak: What is it you deſire?

ICILIUS.

A Lover's Recompence, a Bridegroom's Portion:
Let me not languiſh out another Day
In painful Solitude and barren Wiſhes.——

VIRGINIUS.

VIRGINIUS.

It ſhall be ſo.——What ſays VIRGINIA?

VIRGINIA.

My Will, in ev'ry thing which you require,
But moſt in what may pleaſe ICILIUS,
Shall be the cloſe Companion of my Duty.

VIRGINIUS.

Come near, ICILIUS; from a Father's Hand
Take, take her to thy Boſom.

ICILIUS.

On my Knees
Let me receive the precious Gift.——

VIRGINIUS.

CAMILLA!——
My Thoughts have been ſo buſy with my Child,
That ev'n of her I did not think 'till now:——
Say, where is ſhe?

VIRGINIA.

Impatient for your coming,
CAMILLA flew to watch it near the Gate
Which opens towards Algidum.

ICILIUS.

Behold her,
Haſte in her Step, and Tranſport in her Looks.---

SCENE VI.

Enter CAMILLA.

CAMILLA.

'Tis he, 'tis he.——Welcome! O greatly welcome!
Much did I fear ſome horrible Miſchance
With-held you from us in our greateſt Need:---
But Heav'n is merciful.---O welcome! welcome!---
Now, my VIRGINIA, let your Mind have Reſt.

VIRGINIUS.

VIRGINIUS.

Tell me, CAMILLA, how ſhall I requite
Thy wonderful Integrity, which ſoar'd
Above the Tyrant's Reach?---Now, by my Life,
I will not prove ungrateful to thy Virtue.
As thou haſt been a Mother to my Child,
So henceforth be the Siſter of VIRGINIUS,
My Siſter by Adoption; dear alike
As if by Nature thou wert truly ſuch.

CAMILLA.

How ſhall I render Thanks?

VIRGINIUS.

Nay, thank me not.
Why ſhouldſt thou thank me for an Act of Juſtice,
Due to thy Merit long ago?

CAMILLA.

The Favour—

VIRGINIUS.

The Favour that I do, is to myſelf.

VIRGINIA.

It is to me, CAMILLA.

ICILIUS.

To us all.
Let me not ſeem unmindful of my Promiſe:
For, as the Mother of VIRGINIA,
Shalt thou have Honour at my Houſe To-night.—
Rejoice; it is my bridal Night, CAMILLA.

CAMILLA.

Hah! do we ſport with angry Providence?
Is this a Time to talk of bridal Joys,
While the Decemvir, while the Scourge of Heaven
Hangs o'er our Heads?

VIRGINIUS.

Nay, ſhe adviſes well.

Be rul'd, ICILIUS; let it be To-morrow.

ICILIUS.

No Time ſo proper as this very Night:
Since, if the Tyrant ſhall be diſappointed,
As ſure he muſt, in his audacious Scheme,
It will complete my Victory, when he
Beholds the fair VIRGINIA led, in Triumph,
From his Tribunal to the bridal Bed.——

SCENE IV.

Enter NUMITORIUS.

NUMITORIUS.

VIRGINIUS, hail! Haſte and prepare to meet
The Tyrant in the Forum. All his Friends
Are now conven'd in Readineſs, and ſwarm
Before the Palace-gate.

CAMILLA.

Hah!

VIRGINIUS.

Let them come.—
What Cauſe have I to fear the Tyrant's Friends?
Is not the Roman People on my Side?

NUMITORIUS.

Still there is Cauſe; nay, wond'rous Cauſe to fear;

CAMILLA.

Immortal JOVE!—Freſh Cauſe to fear!—Already
Too dreadful was the Riſk.—O ſay, what Cauſe!

VIRGINIA.

Seek not to know. My Father's awful Preſence
From the dire Riſk of foul Diſhonour ſaves me.
That Riſk was ſolely to be fear'd. All elſe,
Leave to the great and gracious Gods, CAMILLA.

CAMILLA.

Ay me!

VIRGINIUS.

VIRGINIUS.

Conduct them home, ICILIUS:
I'll follow ſtrait. [*Ex.* ICILIUS, VIRGINIA, CAMILLA.
Now ſay; what Cauſe, my Brother?

NUMITORIUS.

I hear the Soldiers of the Capitol
Are order'd down.

VIRGINIUS.

Hah!—Soldiers, do'ſt thou ſay?
I like not that.

NUMITORIUS.

Prepare, VIRGINIUS.

VIRGINIUS.

What muſt I do?

NUMITORIUS.

Go forthwith to your Houſe,
Aſſemble all your Kindred and Relations;
Then, haſting to the Forum, try to kindle
The People's utmoſt Wrath.

VIRGINIUS.

It ſhall be done.—
Why, NUMITORIUS, why ſhould I deſpair?
Rome and its Gods will ſure protect my Child.—
Should this great Expectation fail,—dire Thought!—
Then Rage ſhall riſe in her Defence. Diſtraction,
Neceſſity muſt do the Work.——This Hand,—
Should all elſe fail, ſhould Gods and Men forſake me,—
This Hand ſhall ſave her from the Tyrant's Luſt.---

ACT V. SCENE I.

Scene the Forum.

SICINIUS, DUELLIUS, POMPONIUS, *and Plebeians.*

SICINIUS.

A Scene of ſuch outrageous Inſolence
In Rome before was never acted; no,
Not by the TARQUINS.

DUELLIUS.

Should this vile Attempt
Of APPIUS ſucceed, farewel for ever
Domeſtick ſweet Security;——farewel
The Bliſs of Wedlock, and the Peace of Parents:--
Since, deem'd a Victim, what plebeian Beauty
Could afterwards eſcape thoſe young Patricians,
Who wantonly, beneath the Wing of Power,
Hatch their lewd Schemes?

POMPONIUS.

What infamous Diſorders
Has not already that licentious Band
Committed with Impunity? What Houſe
Feels not, or dreads the worſt of Violations?

DUELLIUS.

When I forget the baſe opprobrious Stripes,
Which ſportful Tyrants have inflicted here
On ſuch as, fir'd by theſe atrocious Wrongs,
Accus'd the bold Offenders,—let me feel
The Scourge myſelf; and may the Shame I ſuffer

Serve

Serve only for a Spectacle of Mirth
To the Beholders.

SICINIUS.

In VIRGINIA's Cauſe
(It is the Cauſe of human Nature, Romans)
Shall we not rouſe, and boldly vindicate
A Father's and a Freeman's ſacred Rights?

Omnes. We will.

SICINIUS.

The Rights of an ICILIUS?

Omnes. We will, we will.

POMPONIUS.

See where the Father comes.

SCENE II.

Enter VIRGINIUS, ICILIUS, NUMITORIUS, VIRGINIA, CAMILLA, *&c.*

VIRGINIUS.

To you, my Friends and Fellow Citizens,
A Soldier calls for Aid; calls for Protection;
For Vengeance calls.—Theſe, as a Supplicant,
With Tears he begs:—Nor only begs them from you,
He likewiſe claims them, as a Soldier's Due,
Who daily for your Children and your Wives
Unſheaths his Sword.

NUMITORIUS.

Rome's wide Circumference
Holds not a braver Soldier than VIRGINIUS.

VIRGINIUS.

But what avails our Courage in the Field,
Our Feats of War, our Labours for our Country,
If a domeſtick Foe, while Rome is ſafe,
Shall range at Will, as in a conquer'd City;
Taking our Children Captives in the Street,

And loading them with worſe Indignities
Than hoſtile Sabines would inflict?

ICILIUS.

My Speech
Is to the Brave and Young; to ſuch as feel,
Or ever felt the gen'rous Charm of Love.——
Behold my Bride, the Portion of my Heart:
As ye prize Women and the Cauſe of Virtue,
Defend her from the Tyrant's lewd Attack;
From beaſtly Violation.

CAMILLA.

Hear me, Romans.———
Were I to tell you what CAMILLA ſuffer'd,
When I beheld the Child of all my Cares
Seiz'd by the Tyrant's brutal Emiſſary,
I know that you would pity me:---You'd ſay,
What could a real Parent ſuffer more?———
Will the Decemvir come a ſecond Time?---
A ſecond Time, ye mighty Romans, ſave her.

NUMITORIUS.

See, ſee that melancholy Train of Mourners;
Whoſe ſtreaming Eyes, with tongueleſs Rhetorick,
Plead for Aſſiſtance to the Gods and you.

VIRGINIUS.

I plead not for myſelf alone; but you:
'Tis for your Wives, your Daughters, and your Siſters;
For the whole Sex in general I plead:---
I plead for Babes, for Children yet unborn.---
Should this vile Plot, this Scheme of Violation,
Meet with Succeſs;---would it not ſerve, ye Romans,
As an Example left upon Record,
To fire the Luſt of ev'ry future APPIUS?

NUMITORIUS.

Hark! hark! he comes.

VIRGINIUS.

VIRGINIUS.

Now, Fellow Citizens!

ICILIUS.

Now, Friends!-----

SCENE III.

Enter APPIUS, MARCUS CLAUDIUS, *and Lictors, with armed Men at a Diſtance.*

APPIUS.

FLAMINIUS, bid the Soldiers ſtand;---
And ſee that they, ſhould Need require, be ready
To quench the Firebrands of Sedition.---Lictors,
Make room for MARCUS CLAUDIUS to proceed
In his Demand.---

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

Have I not Reaſon, APPIUS,
To think your late Delay of Juſtice wrong'd me?--
With all Reſpect and Deference I ſpeak;
But Truth emboldens me to tell you this.
It was too great, too meek a Condeſcenſion,
To let the Faction of ICILIUS
Obtain from you, by Turbulence and Strife,
A Thing which Juſtice and the Law refus'd them.

ICILIUS.

O Villain! Monſter, void of all Religion,
Ceaſe to profane the ſacred Name of Juſtice.

APPIUS.

Proceed, proceed.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

I claim'd VIRGINIA,
As being Daughter to a Slave of mine:
That ſhe is truely ſuch, let DORA witneſs.

APPIUS.

Where is ſhe? Speak.

MARCUS

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

Behold her, APPIUS;
Herſelf by Birth a Slave, and conſequently
The Mother of a Bondmaid.

VIRGINIUS.

Baſe-born Villain!
If DORA be the Mother of VIRGINIA,
What then was NUMITORIA?---Villain, tell me,
How could I be deceiv'd ſo groſly?

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

Thus.
Her Mother ſold her, while a new-born Infant.---

VIRGINIUS.

To whom?

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

To barren NUMITORIA.

VIRGINIUS.

Gods, grant me Patience.---Shall I ſuffer this?
Shall I not tear that foul licentious Tongue,
Shall I not tear it from thee by the Root,
Thou vile Defamer?---But, alas! my Friends,
Why ſhould I waſte my Anger on a Wretch
So far below the Dignity of Vengeance?---
I know for whom my Vengeance is reſerv'd.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

This Rage becomes you not.---
Think where you ſtand:---In the Decemvir's Preſence,

APPIUS.

Nay, let him madly bluſter, if he will.
Proceed.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

DORA will ſuddenly convince him.

APPIUS.

Say, Slave; art thou the Mother of VIRGINIA?

DORA.

DORA.

All that I formerly confeſs'd, and all
That MARCUS CLAUDIUS has affirm'd, is Truth.

VIRGINIUS.

O matchleſs Impudence!

APPIUS.

For ſolid Reaſons
Much DORA's Teſtimony weighs with me.

VIRGINIUS.

What! Shall the Teſtimony of a Slave,
Of a vile Slave, inſtructed by her Maſter,
Be reckon'd here, in this important Cauſe,
Where Freedom is concern'd, a legal Proof?
Shall it be reckon'd Proof ſufficient?

APPIUS.

Peace.---
Myſelf am here an Evidence for you;---
An Evidence above Exception, CLAUDIUS:
Then bid the Slave retire.

ICILIUS.

O all ye Gods!
Both Judge and Evidence!

VIRGINIUS.

Amazing!

APPIUS.

Peace.---
Your Father, as my Client, while he liv'd,
Would often tell me, MARCUS CLAUDIUS,
How DORA, prompted by the Thirſt of Gain,
Had ſold her Infant to a Freeman's Wife.

VIRGINIUS.

If ſo:---Why forthwith did he not reclaim
His alienated Right?

APPIUS.

Still other Cares,
I know not how, preventing him, he dy'd.---

When

When afterwards his Son, whoſe faithful Zeal
Had won my Favour from our earlieſt Youth,
Begun to mention DORA's Crime; reſolv'd,
At once, to know the Grounds of this Pretenſion,
I found, by ſtrict Enquiry, that the Slave,
In very Deed, was guilty. She herſelf,
And others that were privy to the Cheat,
Freemen as well as Slaves, confeſs'd it all.

VIRGINIUS:

One Queſtion more; (I will not curſe thee yet,
Altho' my Reaſon's gone)---what hinder'd thee
From doing Juſtice to thy Client?---Say,
Why did his Wrong ſleep unredreſs'd 'till now?

APPIUS.

Domeſtic Broils, the Function of Decemvir,
And Cares of State; theſe were in Truth the Cauſe:
But now my Client comes himſelf, VIRGINIUS,
To claim his well-atteſted Right; ſhall I,
Shall the chief Maker of the Law refuſe
A Juſtice which the Law requires?

VIRGINIUS.

Law!---Juſtice!

APPIUS.

Thus therefore I decree; that MARCUS CLAUDIUS
Have henceforth free Poſſeſſion of his Slave.

VIRGINIUS.

The Maſk is taken off; and Tyranny
Has bar'd its ſhameleſs Front.---Now, now we ſee
The Plot unravel'd. None but APPIUS.---

APPIUS.

I will not hear thee talk.

VIRGINIUS.

Not hear me, Tyrant!
I'll ſpeak ſo loud, that Heav'n, and Earth, and Hell

Shall

Shall hear my Voice. It is a Father's Voice;
A Father pleading for an only Child.
Should you deſpiſe it, Romans; 'twould aſcend,
And wake the ſleepy Thunderbolt.

APPIUS. (*Aſide to* MARCUS CLAUDIUS.)
Diſpatch;
For I muſt cut him ſhort.--Peace, Madman, Peace.--
Go; fly to ſeize her, MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

VIRGINIUS.
Villain, retire; or thus,---without a Weapon,
I'll tear thee piece-meal in my Fury.---Hence.---
I gave my Daughter to ICILIUS;
And not to thee, Decemvir.---
I train'd her up for chaſte and holy Marriage;
Not for the Bed of foul Adultery.---
What do you then propoſe, that Men and Women
Should live like Beaſts, in a promiſcuous Faſhion?---
Whether my Fellow-Citizens in Rome
Will bear ſuch Things, I know not, APPIUS:---
But this I know; the Legions never will.

DUELLIUS.
Hah! bear it, did he ſay?---We will not bear it.

ICILIUS.
It is not now a Time for Words, but Action.

APPIUS.
I was no Stranger, Romans, to the Plot
Which turbulent ICILIUS had fram'd
To kindle up a civil Strife in Rome:
Nor only from his late ſeditious Brawl,
The boiſt'rous Conduct of VIRGINIUS,
And what yourſelves have ſeen:---I likewiſe know,
From ſure Intelligence, that Faction holds
Cabals in ev'ry Street of Rome To-day.---
Appriz'd of this, not unprepar'd I come
To meet the Tumult.---Bring the Soldiers on.

Theſe factious Leaders of the noiſy Rabble
Shall find it is not always ſafe to ſpurn
Againſt the Majeſty of Government.---

SICINIUS.

Unarm'd, what can we do?

APPIUS.

---Quick drive them hence.

DUELLIUS.

Alas VIRGINIA!

POMPONIUS.

May the Gods protect her.---

VIRGINIUS.

Perdition, will they leave me thus!

ICILIUS.

SICINIUS,---
DUELLIUS, ſtay---POMPONIUS.---

NUMITORIUS.

Follow them,
And bring them back, ICILIUS.

ICILIUS.

Your's the Taſk
To find and bring VALERIUS and HORATIUS;
Them moſt the Tyrant fears.

[*Exeunt* ICILIUS *and* NUMITORIUS.

CAMILLA.

If thou haſt Children;
By their ſweet Lives, by what a Father feels,
By what he fondly wiſhes, be conjur'd
To ſpare my Child.---Alas! thou frown'ſt upon me.
Thy Looks, Decemvir, ſtern as thy Decree,
Have not a Grain of mild Compaſſion in them.---
Perhaps, leſs void of Pity and Remorſe,
Thou, MARCUS CLAUDIUS, may'ſt be work'd upon.
Should it be Gold thou thirſteſt for:---O ſpeak;
What Ranſom will ſuffice?---Thou ſhak'ſt thy Head,

In Token of Refuſal.---Hear me, Gods;
And ſave VIRGINIA from theſe cruel Men.

VIRGINIUS.

So guarded as he is; I cannot reach him.---
Attempt and fail!-----'Twould ſerve the Tyrant's
Purpoſe.---
How then?---It muſt be ſo.---No Way but that
To ſave my Child from Infamy. [*Aſide.*]---Decemvir,
What I have ſaid in Bitterneſs of Rage,
A Father's Anguiſh muſt excuſe. Allow me,
Before I loſe a Child, ſo dearly lov'd,
A Moment's Converſation with herſelf,
And with her Friend CAMILLA. Fully ſkill'd
In ev'ry Secret of my Houſe, ſhe beſt
Can ſolve my riſing Doubts. Then, if in Truth
The Name of Father has been put upon me,
I ſhall, with leſs intolerable Grief,
Rejoin my Fellow-Soldiers in the Camp.

APPIUS.

We grant you Leave.——FLAMINIUS, MARCUS
CLAUDIUS,
There is in private what I would impart
To you.—

[VIRGINIUS *leads* VIRGINIA *to a Corner of the Stage*; CAMILLA *follows.*

VIRGINIUS.

Nay, do not weep, VIRGINIA.
Thy Tears diſtract a Father's Soul:---But Heaven
Refuſes to be ſatisfy'd with Tears.

VIRGINIA.

Is there ought elſe which Heav'n requires?

VIRGINIUS.

There is.---
How ſhall I mention it? [*Aſide.*

VIRGINIA.

VIRGINIA.

Whate'er it be;
You ſhall not find me backward to perform
What you, what Honour, and what Heav'n adviſes.

VIRGINIUS.

I ſee ſhe gueſſes and approves my Meaning. [*Aſide.*
Art thou perſuaded that I love thee much?

VIRGINIA.

Alas! I fear too much; too tenderly.

VIRGINIUS.

O that my Life could ſave thee from Diſhonour.
I'd freely give it.---Doſt thou credit this?

VIRGINIA.

Your Tears are Witneſſes.

VIRGINIUS.

Hah! do I weep?
By Heav'n I knew it not. The Pangs of Nature
Will needs have Way: But Tears and Words are ſhort
Of what I feel.---Retire, CAMILLA;---leave us.

CAMILLA.

Ay me! what dreadful Thing have you to ſay,
Which poor CAMILLA muſt not hear?---My Child!
I tremble for my Child.---

VIRGINIUS.

Nay, do not ſtay to reaſon with me.---Go;
I prithee, go.

VIRGINIA.

Fear not, too fond CAMILLA.
Why ſhould'ſt thou fear to leave me with my Father?

CAMILLA.

Some fatal Reſolution works within him.
O let me fly to find ICILIUS.--- [*Exit.*

VIRGINIUS.

There is but one Way left, VIRGINIA,
To reſcue thee from Shame.

VIRGINIA.

VIRGINIA.

Heav'n points it to me.

VIRGINIUS.

No Choice but Death, or imminent Diſhonour.

VIRGINIA.

Can there be Room for Heſitation here?
Not for myſelf I feel. I feel for you;
For lov'd ICILIUS, and for lov'd CAMILLA.

VIRGINIUS.

Let Madneſs take Poſſeſſion of my Brain;
And I will thank the Gods: for Reaſon now,
The beſt and choiceſt Gift of Nature;---Reaſon
To me would henceforth only prove a Curſe.---

APPIUS.

Look, MARCUS CLAUDIUS:---Doſt thou not perceive
His wild and frantic Geſtures?---By the Gods
There's Evil in his Thoughts. Obſerve him.

VIRGINIA.

Haſte:
The Tyrant's Miniſter.---

VIRGINIUS.

I muſt be quick.---
Since nought but this, O my lov'd only Child,
Can ſave thee from Pollution,---thus I free thee.---

[*Stabs her.*

APPIUS, [*ſtarting up.*]

The ſolid Earth ſhakes under me! 'Twill burſt.
It needs muſt ſwallow me without Delay.---
O matchleſs Horror!--- [*Falls back on his Tribunal.*

VIRGINIA.

From a Father's Hand
Welcome eternal Freedom; welcome Death,
Which ſaves me from Diſhonour.---Beſt of Fathers,--
Death preſſes on me faſt.--Farewel!---and now---
Farewel!

Farewel!--Oh! my belov'd--(to ſpeak thy Name
Is the laſt Office of my Tongue)--ICILIUS. [*Dies.*

VIRGINIUS.

Decemvir, ſee to what Extremity
Thou haſt reduc'd a miſerable Father.---
Look, Tyrant, look, and tremble at the Sight;
For, with this innocent and precious Blood,
Thee to the Furies and infernal Gods
I here devote.

APPIUS.

Seize, ſeize him, Lictors:--Seize him.

VIRGINIUS.

Retire, ye Slaves; nor madly ruſh upon
This Inſtrument of Vengeance in my Hand:
Made rich and crimſon'd in the purple Stream
Ev'n of my Daughter's Life; let me not ſtain it.---
Why ſtain it, Caitiffs, in the vulgar Fate
Of ſuch as you?---For thee, pernicious Tyrant,
This hallow'd Dagger, this devoted Weapon
Will I reſerve: Nor ſhall theſe bloody Fingers
Ungraſp their eager Hold, 'till Heav'n's high Wrath,
For this inhuman, this atrocious Deed,
Has had full Scope.---Seize me not yet, Diſtraction;--
Sweet Reaſon, ſtay;--Tears, ceaſe to flow;--be ſtill,
O Grief, 'till great Revenge has done its Work:
Then Madneſs ſhall be welcome. [*Exit.*

APPIUS.

Lictors---Soldiers.--
They ſtir not. Horror has unmann'd them.---Hah!
What mean thoſe dreadful Shouts?---ICILIUS,
With all the People at his Heels!---Confuſion!
Inevitable Ruin waits.----I come;
Juſtice, I come: But no plebeian Hand
Shall plant a Dagger here. Since I muſt die,
I will, as it becomes me, fall. [*Aſide.*] Haſte,
CLAUDIUS,

See

See that the Body be remov'd.---FLAMINIUS,
Leſt theſe arm'd Cowards, in their Fear, revolt,
And join the raging Populace, retire:
Hence to the Capitol.--O Villains! Traytors!---

ICILIUS. [*Behind the Scenes.*

Hah! MARCUS CLAUDIUS!

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

Spare my Life, VIRGINIUS.

VIRGINIUS.

I did not think of thee; ſo much had APPIUS
Engag'd my whole Revenge.

MARCUS CLAUDIUS.

Let me be baniſh'd.

VIRGINIUS.

Hence, hence; I care not what becomes of thee.

ICILIUS.

Nought ſhall protect him from my Rage. Die, Villain,--
Die worthleſs Wretch.---Now to the Tyrant's Palace.--

[*Shouts.*

SCENE IV.

Scene the Palace of APPIUS.

Enter APPIUS.

'Tis done.---I've ſwallow'd Death's avenging Potion:
And yet I cannot get her from my Thoughts.
Her mangled Image riſes to my View,
Where'er I go.---Plainly my troubled Fancy
Now ſees the dreadful Act repeated; ſees
The Weapon lifed in his Hand.--Earth, Heav'n,
Are ſtruck with Horror.--Hold, VIRGINIUS;
Nature will ſicken at the Wound.---She falls;
And now the vengeful Dagger points at me.---
Who, who would bear ſuch Agony?---'Tis well;
The Poiſon has begun to work at length.---
A mortal Chillneſs ſeizes me all o'er.
Now Life forſakes me faſt.---On the bare Earth

Fall proſtrate, APPIUS.---With thy native Duſt
Haſte, wretched Man to mingle.---What is Life?---
The better Part of APPIUS CLAUDIUS
Dy'd long ago: for, when my Virtue dy'd,
I truely ceas'd to live. [*Shouts.*] VIRGINIUS!
ICILIUS too!---Why doſt thou linger, Poiſon?---
O for a Dagger to diſpatch me.---Burſt
Earth to thy Center; hide me from the Face
Of injur'd Men.---

SCENE V.

Enter VIRGINIUS, ICILIUS, *and the Plebeian Chiefs.*

ICILIUS.

Where, where is APPIUS?
I will not reſt till I have ſlain the Tyrant.
This Hand ſhall do me Juſtice.

VIRGINIUS.

Hold, ICILIUS.
That Taſk I wholly claim. A Father's Hand
Muſt execute the Wrath of Heaven.---Riſe, APPIUS.

ICILIUS.

Riſe, Man of Blood. The fatal Hour is come
For Vengeance; riſe.

APPIUS.

I am beyond your Reach.
The fatal Work is done;---not meanly left
To low Plebeians.---Furies!--Horror!---Hell!
I'm tortur'd!---rack'd!---

VIRGINIUS.

Death's dreadful Agonies
War with his feeble Frame.

APPIUS.

The Sin of Blood,
More heavy than the iron Hand of Death,
Sits on my Soul.---Would but my Being end
With this vain Life;---then it were well;---but---oh!
Have Mercy, Heav'n.---

VIRGINIUS.

VIRGINIUS.

This Anguiſh and Remorſe,
Much injur'd as I am, affect me.

APPIUS.

Mercy!----

VIRGINIUS.

Here ends the Courſe of my Revenge.

---: APPIUS.

It comes---
My Diſſolution---comes,---VIRGINIUS,
I feel---the mortal Poiſon---at my Heart.--- [*Dies.*

ICILIUS.

To ſee the Tyrant thus, was all I aſk'd;---
Where is the Weapon which deſtroy'd VIRGINIA?--
It ſhall not linger in my Hand.

VIRGINIUS.

Forbear;
Raſh Man, forbear to treſpaſs on thy Life.

ICILIUS.---

Rome's greateſt Citizens---

VIRGINIUS.

Have err'd in that.---
True Fortitude, my Son, conſiſts in bearing
The Lot of our Adverſities, like Men;
Like Creatures ſubject to the Will of Heaven.

SCENE VI.

Enter VALERIUS, HORATIUS, *and* NUMITORIUS.

HORATIUS.

We come too late. The Tyrant is no more.

VALERIUS.

He ſhould have been reſerv'd for Public Juſtice.
Say; wherefore have you kill'd him privately?

VIRGINIUS.

It was indeed our Purpoſe to have kill'd him:---
But he, by Poiſon, had prevented us.

HORATIUS.

Nay, then 'tis well.

VALERIUS.

To you, VIRGINIUS,
The Roman Senate and the People owe
This mighty Revolution:---But, alas!
How ſhall we comfort an unhappy Father?

VIRGINIUS.

Yes, as a Father, I muſt ever mourn:---
But, as a Roman, I rejoice, VALERIUS,
In this;---that it has pleas'd the Gods to make
My private Loſs, my Grief, and my Revenge,
The Cauſe of public Benefit to Rome.---
I lov'd my Daughter much: But ſtill I love
My Country more.

ICILIUS.

Your Speech inflames my Zeal,
I love my Country too.

VIRGINIUS.

Then live to ſerve it.---

VALERIUS.

Join, join againſt the common Enemy,
Is now the Voice of ev'ry Roman.

VIRGINIUS.

Hence,
Vile Weapon, hence---Give me my Spear and Shield.
Now the proud Sabines, the preſumptuous Æqui,
Shall quickly feel, from our reſiſtleſs Rage,
That Bondage is no more;---that APPIUS,
The Foe to Liberty, no longer breathes.----

Learn hence what dreadful Woes on Vice attend:
Remorſe, foul Shame, and a diſaſtrous End.
Strong Proofs of this abound in ev'y Age,
Be ſuch the Tragic Leſſons of the Stage:---
And be the Muſe's ſacred Moral, this:---
The Paths of Virtue are the Paths of Bliſs.-----

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

Written by a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mrs. BELLAMY.

I Told the Bard---(ay, yonder he ſtands quaking,
Alas! poor Soul, he's in a piteous Taking!)---
I hope, Sir, you'll excuſe what I ſhall ſay:---
But truely, Sir, I tremble for your Play.
There's a wild Greatneſs in the Plot, I own:
But then, I doubt, it may diſpleaſe the Town.---
" The Town (reply'd our Author) diſapprove
" A Plot that's built on Liberty and Love?
" Is not the fav'rite Character a Woman?
" The Moral chaſte and pure? The Subject Roman?"---
Roman *indeed!---I hope ſuch heath'niſh Nonſenſe*
Will ne'er infect an honeſt Chriſtian Conſcience.---
The Story may (for aught I know) be true:
But here *no Tale improbable will do.---*
What, rather periſh by untimely Fate,
Than ſmile upon a princely Magiſtrate!
So raſh, he could not reign another Year;
So rich, ſhe might have had Ten thouſand clear?
And then what wiſe Plebeian would decline
A Match with the Decemvir's Concubine?---
" How (ſays a Critic) quit her faithful Lover,
" Young, handſome, brave, for ſuch a wicked Rover?

" For

EPILOGUE.

" For one---(a thouſand other Faults combining)---
" That now was to the Vale of Years declining?"---
So then, had APPIUS *been but Five and Twenty,*
The Maid perhaps would not have prov'd ſo dainty.---

ICILIUS *vow'd indeed, and promis'd well:*
But where was he when his VIRGINIA *fell?*
He ſhould have ſkreen'd from Death his blooming Bride;
Or dy'd,--like a true Lover,--by her Side.---
VIRGINIA*'s Death he never could ſurvive;*
But that he was,--in Duty,--bound to live.---
He liv'd then, to diſſolve his Country's Chain;
Avenge his Miſtreſs, and---make Love again.

Then for the grim old Sire, with Frenzy wild,
To be the Butcher of his only Child!---
True, 'twas the Virgin Daughter's Choice to die,
Rather than bear to live with Infamy.---
This muſt be Roman, Engliſh, *or Romance:---*
Such Virtue would not be believ'd in France.

AN

AN
OCCASIONAL EPILOGUE.

By the AUTHOR.

PLACE antient Rome *and* Britain *in the Scale:—*
Which would, for ſolid Liberty, prevail?—
Come; let us fairly poiſe them, if you pleaſe;
'Twill furniſh out an Epilogue with Eaſe.
Here too the Critics will perhaps admit,
That ſuch a Sort of Epilogue is fit;
To ſuch a Roman *Subject tack'd:—at leaſt*
Is fitter than a wanton ill-tim'd Jeſt.——

While Rome *the Sweets of her Republic felt,*
Within her Walls a manly Freedom dwelt.
Of Virtue, Freedom is the Source and Food:
Her Sons were valiant, and their Morals good.
Weak in its Texture, but in Virtue ſtrong;
'Twas thus that her Republic laſted long.
From what elſe could (conceive it as we liſt)
Such a frail Form of Government ſubſiſt?

Soon as the Race of Royalty was run,
A wild licentious Anarchy begun:
Deep were the Roots of Diſcord and Debate;
For Rome *was ſplit into a double State:*
This Way the Senate, that the People drove;
The Rich and Few with needy Numbers ſtrove;
While equal Pow'rs their adverſe Leaders crown'd,
Without a Prince, to caſt the Balance, found.—

Dire was the Strife; nor otherwiſe appeaſed,
Than as the Virtue of the Victors pleaſed.
In Rome, *when antient Virtue ceas'd to dwell,*
Forthwith the Frame of her Republic fell.

The

AN OCCASIONAL EPILOGUE.

The laſt great Champions of her Rights ill-ſped;
And Freedom, with the Love of Country, fled.---
Be this Truth grav'd on her Republic's Tomb:
It bore the Viper Ruin in its Womb.---

Not ſo with Britain's *kingly Commonwealth;*
Her Source is Wiſdom, and her Baſis Health.
Firm as a Rock the noble Syſtem ſtands;
Faſhion'd by Time and Reaſon's ſkilful Hands.---
With Liberty, not leſs than Rome, *inſpir'd;*
By the ſame Sparks of human Diſcord fir'd;
In one well-jointed State, of Form compleat,
Commons and Peers, pois'd by the Scepter, meet.---

Mighty the Monarch's Pow'r on Britain's *Throne;*
As much as Heav'n and Nature meant to one,
He, ſtrong to bleſs his People, and to ſave;
Only wants Pow'r to ruin and enſlave.---
Princes, vain is the Pride, the Pleaſure low,
Which from an abject ſervile Homage flow.
Would ye grow truly great; look here, and then,
Like Britain's *Monarch, be the Kings of Men.*
Inſtead of forging foreign Fetters, deign
To free your Subjects, and by Reaſon reign.---

How great, how godlike is the King! how bleſt,
Who ſtands the Shield of Liberty confeſt!
Whom princely Merit; Mercy, Juſtice crown:
Who deems the public Happineſs his own:
The Widow-making Sword who never draws,
Except for Freedom and in Europe's *Cauſe!*
Him hail, ye Britons. *Hail him ev'ry Land,*
Which feels the Prop of his imperial Hand.
Be this the Nation's and the Muſe's Song:---
Live GEORGE, *the Father of his People, long.*

FINIS.